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**Abstract:** Career decision making is a vital aspect of a student's higher education and academic journey starting it as a university student. It influences their professional trajectories and socioeconomic wellbeing with the career they have opted for life. The primary aim of this study is to investigate the factors affecting career decision making of the students at university level. The research work revolves around some major assumptions that shall be impacting the career decision making of students. For the purposeful findings of the research objectives and questions, the study implied a mixed-method research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The major quantitative and qualitative findings of the study revealed a categorical influence of family, economic considerations and higher education trends in the country for career decision making for university level. The study recommends a stern need of career guidance and career counseling from school and intermediate level to students for a better career selection owing to every aspect of this fast paced world of emerging disciplines. Considering the influencing factors of career decision making at university level, this research work serves a broadened scope of shaping the process of career decision making

**Introduction**

In today's fast paced global economy and advanced world, career decision making has emerged as one of the most significant milestones in a student's life (Kwiek, 2015). Career choice is a crucial part of modern life. The right career choice depends on a student's qualifications, personality, and enthusiasm (Banagiri et al., 2022). A career is not just about earning a living; it also shapes a person's personality and outlook on life. In today's competitive world, choosing the right career is more challenging than ever. With globalization, organizations are hiring employees from all over the world, making the job market even more competitive. Youth less than 30 years of age make up 72% of the province's population, yet they face low literacy rates and limited access to skill development programs. Significant disparities exist between male and female education levels, as well as between urban and rural areas. Furthermore, employment opportunities often fail to align with the skills and trades available in local

markets, exacerbating socioeconomic challenges.

Research has identified several key factors that impact career decisions. Kerka (2000) asserts that a variety of factors, including personality, interests, self-concept, identity, globalization, socialization, role models, social support, and the availability of resources like information and money, are important. Religion, peer groups, and environmental factors can also influence career choices. Other factors, such as personal circumstances, also play a significant role in shaping career choices. Ferry (2006) found that academic achievement, personal circumstances, and other factors influence profession choice. These findings highlight the complexity of career choice and the need for students to consider multiple factors when making decisions about their future careers.

### **Objectives**

1. To investigate the educational background factors that influence career choice of students at university level.
2. To investigate the family background factors that influence career choice of students at university level.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the primary determinants of university-level students' career choices?
2. How do family background and parental influence affect college students' profession choices and decision-making?

### **Literature review**

This study explores the key factors influencing young graduates in making career decisions, drawing on recent research. University students often face challenges in selecting careers that align with their interests, skills, and available opportunities. Even at the secondary level, choosing subjects and career paths remains a complex process (Issa et al., 2008). Family background plays a significant role in shaping students' career choices. According to Maina et al. (2014), career choice involves selecting a field of study that aligns with an individual's interests, passion, and abilities, often influenced by parents, peers, and role models. In the 21st century, career selection has become increasingly complex, significantly impacting personal decisions (Saleem et al., 2014). Salami (2008) highlighted that university students often make poor career choices due to factors such as inadequate career information, peer influence, parental pressure, teacher guidance, job-related status, and insufficient career counseling in schools.

### **Career Choice and Decision-making at University Level**

Geçikli (2012) explained that the term 'career' originates from French and Latin, referring to a professional, marketable, or business activity pursued during one's lifetime. Latif et al. (2016) described it as a blueprint for an individual's professional journey. According to Kolawole et al. (2012), career choice is the process of selecting a specific path or field. Stumpf (2019) further defined a career as 'a sequence of work related positions held throughout a person's life.' To ensure informed decisions, career choices should ideally be addressed early at the school and tertiary education levels. This definition highlights the dynamic and evolving nature of a career, comprising a series of work-related positions that unfold over an individual's life time. The changing landscape of the modern world has added new challenges to career development. Kulesza et al., (2015) notes that the changes in family structures and globalization have added difficulties to an individual's career choice. This observation underscores the need for individuals to be adaptable and resilient in the face of changing circumstances. A career is defined as "the sequence of activities and attitudes that associated with the individuals' work roles during their lifetime" by Friess et al. (2023), who provide a contrasting viewpoint. This viewpoint highlights how crucial it is to take into account the many behaviors and dispositions people display over

the course of their professional life. Additionally (Braza et al. 2015). According to another perspective, a career is "the sequence of activities and attitudes that associated with the individuals' work roles during their lifetime" (Friess et al., 2023).

### **Factors Affecting Students' Career Choice at University Level**

Numerous factors impact students' career decisions at the university level (Edwards et al., 2011). Students' personalities, interests, skills, self-perception, cultural background, socialization, globalization, role models, familial support, and financial resources are some of these aspects. According to Bandura (1977), a person's professional decisions are greatly influenced by their academic performance, social connections, personal skills, and the environment. Salami (2008) emphasized that financial incentives, academic achievement, personal interests, and parental expectations all have an impact on employment decisions. According to Perrone et al. (2004), students' goals are also influenced by other characteristics like ethnicity, education, courses studied, and career results. Edwards et al. (2011) found that gender, personality, career outcomes, family, peers, and socio-cultural factors are key influences on career choices.

#### **I. Family Background**

Family background plays a crucial role in shaping students' career choices. Parents significantly influence their children's career decisions, often through direct inheritance, role models, or apprenticeship conditions. Research has shown that parents' professions, knowledge, income levels, beliefs, and information about various occupations, including the local and international job market, can impact their children's career selection (Saleem et al., 2014).

#### **II. Personality traits, Interests, and Aptitude**

Personal interest refers to the individual's enthusiasm and preference for a particular profession (Liaw et al., 2017). According to Holland's "Career Typology" theory, individuals tend to choose career environments that align with their personality and interests (Holland et al., 1966). Personal interests are shaped by various influences, including parents, school, peers, and life experiences. A strong interest in a particular field can significantly motivate individuals to pursue it with dedication and passion.

#### **III. Tutors' Influence on Students' Career Choice**

A study conducted on South African students by Shumba et al. (2012) identified teachers as the most significant influence on students' aspirations and career choices. They found that, similar to parents, teachers play a vital role in shaping the career paths that young students eventually pursue. Likewise, Faitar et al. (2013) investigated the role of teachers in guiding students toward science-oriented careers.

#### **IV. University Programs and Students' Career Choices**

Universities play a critical role in providing higher education and equipping students with the skills needed to contribute to the national workforce. In the country, there are currently 79 public sector universities and 60 private sector universities. These institutions collectively enrol 1.319 million students, with only 14% of the total enrolment attributed to private sector universities (Alian et al., 2017).

#### **V. Social and Economic Factors and Students' Career Choices**

Economists have extensively studied career decision-making behaviours, aiming to understand the factors influencing this process. Research indicates that anticipated earnings play a crucial role in shaping career decisions. The choice of career paths often depends significantly on the expected future financial returns associated with a particular field of study. However, gender differences have been observed in this regard, with female students generally showing less sensitivity to the influence of anticipated earnings compared to their male counterparts (Boudarbat, 2008; Thomas & Zhang, 2005;

Ermisch & Francesconi, 2000).

#### **VI. Environmental and Contextual factors**

Some key environmental and contextual factors that influence career choice decisions include Family Background and Support, Socioeconomic Factors, Cultural and Social Influences, Academic and Institutional Factors, Self-Perception and Identity, Economic and Labor Market Factors, Experiential Learning and Internships, Globalization and Technological Advancements, Personal Circumstances and Life Events, and Career Myths and Misinformation. Four major factors influence people's career choices, according to Krumboltz's (1979) Social Learning Theory of Career Decision-Making: task approach skills, environmental conditions and events, genetic endowment and special abilities, and instrumental and associative learning experiences.

#### **VII. Socio-cultural factors influences**

Socio-cultural factors significantly influence university students' career choices, as evidenced by numerous studies. Singaravelu et al. (2005) highlighted that societal needs and cultural norms shape individuals' career aspirations, with gender and ethnicity playing pivotal roles. Borchert (2002) emphasized that students' interactions within their social environment shape their attitudes and career decisions, reflecting the values and suggestions of their community.

#### **Theoretical Framework**

This study aimed to investigate the factors influencing students' career choices at university level. This study, in its qualitative perspective, utilized the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) in understanding how the external and internal factors influence individuals' career decisions to choose the field of study at university level. SCCT was developed by Lent et al. (1994), suggests that human thoughts are developed and shaped by not only the environment but also by personal factors. Hence, human decision-making choices are influenced by both the external factors (family Factors, social factors, economic factors, career guidance and resources) and also by internal factors (personal and motivational factors) (Bandura, 1989).

#### **Methodology**

The study utilized mixed method of research sequentially. Research method includes procedures for collecting, analyzing, interpreting and reporting data in research studies (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Mixed-method of research is the combination of qualitative and quantitative approach to collect and analyze data (Creswell & Tashakkori, 2007).

#### **Sequential Explanatory Design**

There are different designs of mixed research method i.e. sequential and concurrent designs. In concurrent designs, the qualitative and quantitative data are collected in parallel while in sequential designs the qualitative and quantitative data are collected in series. In sequential explanatory design which is used to conduct this study, the quantitative data are collected and analyzed before qualitative data.

#### **Population of the study**

The data collected from University of Turbat (UOT) informed that there were about two thousand five hundreds twenty-one (2521) students in the main campus of the university. Out of which one thousand three hundred twenty (1320) are in first year. Undergraduate students of the first year are in population loop of the study.

#### **Sample and sampling Techniques**

The sample for Qual and Quan phase of the research are selected separately in sequential order. For quantitative phase, sample size is calculated using Chochran's formula for sample size calculation. After

manipulation and reducing the sample, we get 249 undergraduate students of UOT as sample of the study. In QUAN phase, data were gathered from 251 undergraduate students of UOT.

### Instrumentation

The questionnaire comprises of two sections. Section-I was developed in order to collect information about demography of research participants. Section-II was developed to generate data the factors that contribute in taking career decision making. Five level rating scales were used to generate and record research participants' responses. In qualitative phase of the study, Semi-structure interviews have been conducted with the participants individually and open-ended questions have been asked in order to consolidate and triangulate quantitative phase findings.

### Results

#### a) Quantitative Results

Table 4.1: Influence of academic factors

Statements	S.D	D	N	A	S.A
My higher secondary (FSC) grades presented me only this career	67 (26.5%)	73 (28.9%)	43 (17.0%)	53 (20.9%)	17 (6.7%)
Because I fulfilled the merit requirement, therefore, I chose this career	35 (13.8%)	67 (26.5%)	61 (24.1%)	64 (25.3%)	26 (10.3%)
Since the university is in my hometown and I have easy access, therefore, chose this career	52 (20.6%)	58 (22.9%)	36 (14.2%)	68 (26.9%)	39 (15.4%)
I chose this career because it offers the practical/laboratory work that I like to do	46 (18.2%)	62 (24.5%)	51 (20.2%)	34 (13.0%)	30 (11.9%)
Due to the academic excellence of the university, I chose this career	42 (16.6%)	46 (18.2%)	48 (19.0%)	81 (32.0%)	36 (14.2%)
Due to my previous less academic performance, I was compelled to choose this career	77 (30.4%)	75 (29.6%)	45 (17.8%)	33 (13.0%)	23 (9.1%)
Because the university offers the degree program which I am comfortable to pursue my career	25 (9.9%)	32 (12.6%)	38 (15.0%)	117 (46.2%)	41 (16.2%)

However, the minority, 36, participants were neutral about the statement. Additionally, 62(24.5%) participants disagreed the statement which was 'I chose this career because it offers the practical/laboratory work that I like to do'. And 30 participants strongly agreed the statement. This indicated that the majority of the participants have chosen this department as their career because the faculty offers practical things such as the library facility.

Similarly, majority of the participants, 81(32%) participants stated the sentence as agreed to show that they choose this faculty to the academic excellence in the university. However, the minority, 36, participants strongly agreed the statement. Thus, results indicate that majority of the respondents choose this field of the study due to the quality of academic performance of the faculty. The majority of the participants strongly disagreed the statement that they were compelled by their previous academic record to get admission in this department to continue their career however; the minority of the participants strongly agreed the statement. Indicating that the participant's choice of this field is due to their previous academic records. Moreover, the majority of the participants, 117(46.2%), participants agreed that they choose this department as their career because the university offers the degree program which is comfortable for them to pursue their career. Contrary to the majority, the minority

remarked this statement as strongly disagreed.

Thus, the results showed that majority of the participants choose this field for their career due to the comfort-ability of the university offering degree program.

Table 4.2: Model summary: effect of family influence on career decisions making

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.254a	.064	.061	.76856
Predictors: (Constant), Family-Influence				

In the Table 4.2, it is shown  $R=0.254$ , that there is positive effect of family-influence on career decision making of university level students. However, the effect of predictor (family influence) on career decisions is moderate.

Table 4.3: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.191	1	10.191	17.252	.000b
	Residual	148.262	251	.591		
	Total	158.452	252			

a. Dependent Variable: CDM

b. Predictors: (Constant), Family Influence

The ANOVA in Table 4.13 indicates that the regression model is statistically significant as  $P<0.05$ . So, the null hypotheses will be rejected and there is a significant effect of family influence on career decisions making of university level students.

Table 4.4: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.954		19.507	.000
	Family-Influence	.246	.254	4.154	.000

a. Dependent Variable: CDM

The Table 4.14 displays coefficient, Unstandardized Coefficients (B) for Family Influence = 0.246,  $\text{sig}=.000$ . The statistics indicate that for one unit the increase in family influence will increase 0.246 units in career decisions making, with a significant P value.

In short, the analysis demonstrates that family influence has moderate positive effect on career decisions making of university level students. University level student career decision making potential can be improving by increasing or improving different indicators of family influence.

#### b) Qualitative Results

The qualitative data, collected through semi-structured interviews from ten participants, analysis



involved identifying themes and subthemes, BASED ON DIFFERENT FACTORS which are influence on career decision making, from the participants' excerpts, which were then described and supported with quotes from the participants.

### **Family Factors**

#### **Family background**

Family background plays an important role in career decision-making process. In this regard, many participants appreciated the family background in the following way:

*Yes, my family and my guide, that is my mom and today whatever, I'm just due to her and her support.*

*Due to her today I'm running my education. (Respondent 3)*

*Respondent was of the view that elders in a family are the ones who influence any decision a young want to make in life. That of career choice, yes of course my family had a great extent of influence in my decision. (Respondent 6) Absolutely yes. My family give me options to choose because they are all the support I have for example, money, education and ethical moral support. (Respondent 7)*

*Family is everything. I as a student can never think of against their decisions and guidance they have in heart for me. (Respondent 8)*

*She was of the view that as a girl she thinks that for any girl the family is supreme influential factor in a girl's life. Be it career choice, or anything. (Respondent 10)*

However, four respondents explained contrary to the positive influence of the family background regarding their career choice decisions. The indicated the research question in the following way:

*No, my family didn't have a great influence on my career decision. (Respondent 1)*

*NO, my family has no influence on my career decision, because my family given me free choice whatever I want to become I can. (Respondent 4) There was not any guidance and counseling concept in my family and there was no any support since my parents are uneducated. (Respondent 5)*

*No, though family has a role in everything I do but there was not any influence in my career choice decision. (Respondent 9)*

#### **Family's suggestions for career choice**

Majority of the participants argued that family provides effective suggestions for the career choices. They explained in the following statements:

*"Yes, they did suggest to me different career paths to follow. Like Agriculture, biological fields and others, but my father and brother suggested me do B.Ed. Education. As they crafted a very positive scenario in my mind for education its scope and relevancy in society. Therefore, I responded positively that Yes, I will do B.Ed. Education." (Respondent 1)*

*"Yes, in my family some of them had suggested me to go Agriculture, I didn't select that later on my parents suggested e about education that it's nice field." (Respondent 2)*

*"Yes, they had given me so many suggestions like family members, friends, teachers, I was good at math some suggested me to go BBA even they told my mom to insist her to take admission there, I listened all but at the end I chosen education field as being female its suitable. (Respondent 3)*

*"Since my parents are uneducated, they had no knowledge about career counseling, there was a man and he was my classmate or a teacher at DELTA he suggested me to choose education. Firstly, I was going to economics but later on I turn this field into education. (Respondent 5)*

*Yes. Family had a great role. They suggested different career paths to choose. Their choice of filed was my first priority though I was in matric years. I responded positively. (Respondent 6)*

*"Of course. Family is both a support and pressure. However, with time I came to know their choice was the best for me. (Respondent 7)*

*"Yes. My family wanted me to become a doctor. I couldn't be. So they give me other career choices that are available in our society. (Respondent 8)*

*"Yes, they did suggest me different career paths to follow. Like Agriculture, biological fields and others but my father and brother suggested me to do B.Ed. Education. As they crafted a very positive scenario in my mind for education, its scope and relevancy in society. Therefore, I responded positively that Yes I will do B.Ed. Education. (Respondent 9)*

*Of course, family had a role specific to my career choice they suggested me multiple fields that I need to choose among them. (Respondent 10)* However, only one participant among all interpreted that her family wanted her to be a doctor and then by the family's suggestions she has chosen her present field. She narrated that:

*As I said before that I wanted to become a doctor unfortunately, I couldn't be then later on my family suggested me to select a better field for you. (Respondent 4)*

### **Family's pressure**

The majority of the participant stated that the family emphasizes no pressure for career choices. They narrated:

*No, there was not that sort of pressure on me from family members for any particular career. And as I told you I selected myself Education I did select it and I am happy today that I am doing it. It did affect positively my career decision making. (Respondent 1)*

*No, among family members, no such pressure to choose a subject or a field no pressure I selected education as per my own passion and interest. (Respondent 2)*

*NO, there was no such pressure or any kind of force from family side. Just suggestions were there. (Respondent 3)*

*No, any pressure from family side on my career choice, I was free to choose what and where my interest lies, as my parents were uneducated. (Respondent 4)*

*First of all, in these modern times, families never pressurize to do anything. But yes, family influence is a lot. (Respondent 6)*

*No, there was not that sort of pressure on me from family members for any particular career. And as I told you I selected myself Education I did select it and I am happy today that I am doing it. It did affect positively my career decision making. (Respondent 7)*

*No. family had an influence, but they did not have any pressure for selecting a career choice. There was a positive impact that impacted my career choice decision. (Respondent 8)*

*Off course not. I never felt any pressure from my family to pursue any career choice decision. This was a positive thing family asked me about my career choice decision. (Respondent 9)*

*Yes, family had a pressure and influence both on me after I didn't want to do education. But job salary and opportunities which affected my career decision making. (Respondent 10)*

Only, one participant argued in contrary to the theme, she narrated that:

*"There was multiple pressure on me by getting or achieving this field. As my uncle suggested, me take medical, but I have refused to take medical since my knowledge was not good enough for medical. (Respondent 5)*

Family factors play a significant role in shaping career decisions. The majority of participants acknowledged that their family background provided guidance, support, and influence that helped them make informed career choices. Family members suggested different career paths to follow, often based on their perception of the individual's strengths and interests. However, while family influence was prevalent, most participants denied feeling pressured by their family to pursue a particular career choice, with only a few exceptions where pressure was experienced.



## Discussion

By interpreting the qualitative data, study focused on main research questions driven from main research objectives. Five main themes generated from the sub-themes of the research questions. The sub-themes of each theme showed different perceptions of the participants. Here are some key findings displayed from the participants' excerpts regarding each sub-theme relating with main themes.

The study revealed, by the both data the quantitative and qualitative, that family factors play a significant role in shaping career decisions by providing guidance, support, and influence that helped them make informed career choices. Family members suggested different career paths to follow, often based on their perception of the individual's strengths and interests. Moreover, most participants denied feeling pressured by their family to pursue a particular career choice, with only a few experienced families' pressure on deciding career choices. In this way, Kulesza et al., (2015) found that family structures added difficulties to an individual's career choice. Similar to these findings, Wong (2019) highlighted that factor such as family background, a significantly influencing perspective on career decisions.

## Conclusion

In 21st century and in this era of global economy and advanced world, career decision making has emerged as one of the most significant milestones in a student's life, while University students are at the crossroads of education and employment, where numerous internal and external factors converge to influence their career pathways, this research is an attempt to shower them some ease with settling one of their most important decision of life. As making a right career decision is a crucial aspect of a student's life the study with main objectives aimed to find out every inch the impactful agents that affect their career decision making process. The researcher of the study went through multiple related literatures on this topic to make it easy for students of Baluchistan about their career choice decision making at university level.

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